

VZCZCXRO5908  
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDH RUEHHM RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHMA  
RUEHNEH RUEHPB RUEHPOD RUEHPW RUEHTM RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNE #1098/01 1491352  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 291352Z MAY 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6774  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC  
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC  
RUCPDC/NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAEPA/EPA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001098

SIPDIS

STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS  
STATE FOR STAS  
DOE FOR INTERNATIONAL  
INTERIOR FOR FWS RILEY  
STATE PASS TO NSF FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [ECON](#) [SOCI](#) [KSCA](#) [KGHG](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI EST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 25 TO  
MAY 29, 2009

1. Below is a compilation of Environment and Science & Technology  
highlights from Embassy New Delhi for the week of May 25-29, 2009,  
including the following:

- Cyclone Aila Impacts Sundarbans Tiger Reserve
- Delhi Government Plans Climate Change Fund
- ISRO to Launch Second Space Capsule Recovery Experiment by  
December 2009
- IIT Mumbai Develops Low Cost Geographic Information System  
Software
- Defense Institute of Bio-Energy Research Develops Technology to  
Grow Cordyceps Sinensis in the Lab

-----  
ENVIRONMENT  
-----

Cyclone Aila Impacts Sundarbans Tiger Reserve

2. Going by preliminary assessments, West Bengal forest officials  
believe Cyclone Aila, which hit West Bengal on May 25, 2009, has  
seriously impacted wildlife at the Sundarbans Tiger Reserve (STR).  
Media reports claim that as many as twelve tigers may be dead, in  
addition to spotted deer, wild boar, crocodiles, monkeys, and  
snakes. Reports also claim that over 300 deer were swept away from  
two separate West Bengal-run deer breeding centers inside the STR.  
The full extent of the damage caused by Aila will only be known once  
forest officials survey the area which may take several weeks.  
ESTOffs believe that if the extent of damage reported is accurate,  
this could have serious implications for the tiger population and  
its prey base in STR. Although the official tiger population in STR  
is 265, conservationists believe the reserve had no more than a  
hundred tigers before cyclone Aila struck. STR forest officials,  
along with a Wildlife Protection Society of India field officer,  
successfully rescued an adult tiger that had taken shelter in a  
village hut vacated due to flooding. Officials expect more such  
incidents to occur as surviving tigers stray into villages in search  
of prey.

Delhi Government Plans Climate Change Fund

3. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has plans to earmark a  
special fund to reduce the impacts of climate change on the city.  
The proposal has received the concurrence of Delhi Mayor Kanwar Sen  
and will be forwarded to Chief Minister Sheila Dixit for review.  
Once cleared, the MCD will formulate five year and ten year plans  
for combating climate change by promoting environment friendly  
projects. However, details regarding the level and source of  
financing for the fund have not been determined.

## ISRO to Launch Second Space Capsule Recovery Experiment by December 2009

¶4. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched its first space capsule recovery experiment (SRE-1) in January 2007 which carried out two microgravity experiments while in orbit. ISRO states SRE-2 will carry out twice as many tests over a period of ten days in orbit. ISRO is working with the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency on two of the experiments which use E. Coli and photosynthetic bacteria to study cell division, genomics, and proteomics in microgravity conditions. A third experiment is focused on the influence of space radiation and microgravity on seeds of rice and medicinal plants. The fourth experiment is a material science experiment planned by IIT Kanpur involving the study of the melting and sintering of metal powder under microgravity conditions using a copper-tin alloy system.

## IIT Mumbai Develops Low Cost Geographic Information System Software

¶5. Media report IIT Mumbai has developed a low-cost Geographic Information System (GIS) software planning tool package which can be used in a wide range of applications including remote sensing data analysis, urban development, resource management, disaster management, and community development programs by government agencies, NGOs and industry. The software was developed by a team

NEW DELHI 00001098 002 OF 002

lead by Prof. Venkatachalam of the Centre of Studies in Resources Engineering at IIT Mumbai. The software is now being exclusively marketed by Bhugol GIS Pvt Ltd, a company incubated under the Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at IIT Mumbai. The company's director, Dr. Parvatham Venkatachalam, informed ESTFSN the cost of a single user license fee is less than 1/10th the cost of competitive products such as ESRI's ArcInfo.

## Defense Institute of Bio-Energy Research Develops Technology to Grow Cordyceps Sinensis in the Lab

¶6. Media report the Defense Institute of Bio-Energy Research (DIBER), a Government of India Defense Research and Development Organization lab, has recently transferred its indigenously developed technology for the growth of cordyceps sinensis mycelium to Biotech International Limited, New Delhi. The firm's chief microbiologist, Dr. Sangeetha, confirmed the transfer from DIBER in a conversation with ESTFSN and stated the technology would allow production at costs far below the typical USD 6,250 per kg. She further added Biotech International does not plan to mass produce and market cordyceps extract, but rather develop and market cordyceps-based products for various ailments. Cordyceps sinensis is a medicinal fungus which grows in high altitude regions in India, Nepal, Tibet, and China and is used as a remedy for various maladies including chronic bronchitis, insomnia, hypertension, pneumonia, tuberculosis, and anemia.

BURLEIGH